

# MICHELLE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

*In 2005, I was provided with the opportunity to serve as a contributor to The Star's editorial online readers panel IN Touch. The blog serves as an online community where IN Touch members post their opinions on breaking news from Central Indiana, Washington, D.C., and around the world. Below, are a few articles I contributed to IN Touch.*

## **The Children Lose Again**

I have followed the stories about the Flanner House Higher Learning Center, which came into existence to provide a second chance to struggling students who were not successful at a regular school. Unfortunately, city officials decided to close the school. They had viable reasons, including the fact that \$700,000 went unaccounted for. The center also inflated attendance numbers and had low academic ratings.

When I grew up attending Washington Township schools, I often wondered why school systems were so unequal in terms of money, learning environments and teaching materials. I recall hearing about how the majority of students in inner-city schools were not learning and were being warehoused until they either graduated or dropped out.

How can we expect children to have opportunities in life if they are not provided with the adequate schools?

Flanner House Higher Learning Center is another testament to why and how our most precious treasure, our children, lose once again. Now who will take responsibility for the thousands of dollars that are not accounted for?

## **What A Fine Mess**

Taxpayers again have been put in the position of having to pay for someone else's mistake. The front page of the July 23 Star said it all: \$153 million dollar mess. Residents have been waiting for the re-opening of the Central Library since it was first closed for the glorious renovations we were promised. From what I gathered from the detailed report, the project was doomed from the start for several reasons. One that stands out in my mind is that no one was directly held responsible for the oversight of the colossal endeavor. In simple terms, there were just too many hands in the pot, causing all kinds of breakdown in the process.

Now, I believe the board members had good intentions, but somehow the message was lost in translation. With that said, I'm sure many of you are like me; we just want our beloved library to open again, allowing the opportunity to partake in what will be one of Indy's most exciting destinations.

## **Violence Taints Summer**

Much to my dismay, summer has come to an end. Gone are the leisure days of basking in the sun, swimming at public pools and frolicking at Holliday Park. And, though summer time is a joyous time to be out and about, our city tends to always be overcome with an outrageous number of deaths, many attributed to our youth killing one another.

Among those who lost their lives was Alexander Anthony, a 12-year old innocent bystander who was doing what children do: walking home in his neighborhood. His death marked the 114th homicide in Indianapolis this year.

About a month ago, the stations of Radio One sponsored a town hall meeting where all citizens were invited to share their ideas and suggestions on how to counteract the violence in our city. Comments included increasing funding for youth activities, more parental involvement and enhancing communication between law enforcement and residents.

It is my hope that next summer we will see some of the suggestions become reality, thus lessening the senseless deaths that cast a dark shadow on what should be a joyful time of year.